

monk Feb 21 (David Scribner); one to three in the Pleasant Valley area of Dutch from Dec 24–Feb 1 (EP); one at Red Hook Jan 5 (AJ). Snow Bunting: more reports than usual thru entire winter; last report Mar 18 at Blooming Grove (ME) and at Bashakill (MB); max 500 Feb 12 at Millerton, Dutch (Thelma Haight).

Spring reports due no later than June 5.

Pellwood Lake, Highland Falls, N.Y. 10928

REGION 10 — MARINE

THOMAS H. DAVIS AND LEE MORGAN

Last fall's Evening Grosbeak invasion, easily this area's largest ever, was all but over by late December. By the Christmas Count season only a few scattered flocks remained. During mid-winter only the Montauk area offered numbers of "winter finches"—siskins were common there along with smaller flocks of Red Crossbills, and a flock of Pine Grosbeaks wintered at the Manor. The large numbers of red-polls reported from eastern Massachusetts failed to reach Long Island, and widely scattered flocks of only up to forty were seen during January and February.

Data from only five Christmas Counts is available this year: Captree (abbreviated CaCC)—Dec 21, 131 species; Central Suffolk (CSCC)—Dec 26, 110 species; Montauk (Mk)—Dec 28, 102 species; Northern Nassau County (NNCC)—Dec 29, 100 species; and Queens (QCC)—Dec 21, 82 species. Last year it was mentioned in this column that the Captree Count "is still growing, and with a few more observers and experience with the area, its total may soon rival that of the two perennials." (Central Suffolk and Southern Nassau). This year they put it all together. Their total of 131 set a state record. Numbers of Cardinals and House Finches on the Montauk count indicate a continuing increase on eastern Long Island—Cardinal, 51 (previous high 20) and House Finch, 66 (previous high 25).

A massive warm front on March 19 sent temperatures into the low 70's. A number of unusually early migrants were noted following its passage, and after several less pronounced warm fronts during the next two weeks. A Least Bittern and a Blue Grosbeak were recorded on March 25, a White-eyed Vireo on the 29th, and another White-eyed Vireo plus a Cattle Egret on the 31st. A rumored Brown Pelican at Oak Beach on the 20th caused great speculation and a diligent search by several competent birders, but alas, no valid confirmation.

Birders who read the U.S. Daily Weather Maps closely can often spot the conditions which produced the above records. In general, it requires a strong warm front advancing north over the Caribbean to move across the southeastern states and out over the Atlantic, forced seaward by colder air covering the eastern states. Usually, this warm air will extend northward *over water* and recurve towards the New England states. Trans-Caribbean migrants will remain airborne across the Florida peninsula and the southeastern states under such conditions. Unable to land, unable to turn back into the wind, and unwilling to fly toward colder air, they must remain aloft until the warm air mass finally strikes land. The arrival of this warm air is usually associated with rain as the air masses collide, but birders willing to suffer the weather might find their spirits anything but dampened by such often exciting early migration. For a fuller explanation of this phenomenon see Aaron Bagg and James Baird's excellent analysis (illustrated with weather maps) of an early April migration in Massachusetts, published in *Audubon Field Notes* (15: 381–383, 1961).

Rarities reported this season included Tufted Duck, Lesser Black-backed Gull, Sabine's Gull, Common Murre, Black Guillemot, Black-billed Magpie, Varied Thrush, and Boat-tailed Grackle. Unusually late or wintering birds were Cattle Egret, Turkey Vulture, Red Phalarope, Willet, and Northern Waterthrush. Un-

usually early migrants were Glossy Ibis, Least Bittern, 2 White-eyed Vireos, and Blue Grosbeak. An increasing number of reports of Double-crested Cormorants lingering into January, all by experienced observers, indicates that this species ought to be upgraded to the list of regular winterers. The same holds true for the Pigeon Hawk. Seven birds were reported this season, with up to three wintering in the Jones Beach area.

Contributors frequently cited: BC—Barbara Conolly; AD—Aline Dove; GR—Gilbert Raynor; RR—Richard Ryan; RP—Richard Plunkett; CW—Cornelius Ward; LW—Leroy Wilcox; TD—Thomas Davis.

Abbreviations used: JBWR—Jamaica Bay Wildlife Refuge.

LOONS—DUCKS: Great Cormorant: max 352, Dec 29, Gardiner's Island (mob). Double-crested Cormorant: Dec 21—Jan 12, Shinnecock Inlet (GR); Dec 21, off Fire Island (RR); Jan 18, Moriches Inlet (GR). Cattle Egret: Dec 31, Brookhaven (P. Puleston)—latest Regional record; arr Mar 31, Cutchogue (P. Stoutenburgh, AD)—early. Common Egret: Dec 25, Westhampton (LW); arr Mar 16, JBWR (H. Johnson)—early. Black-crowned Night Heron: "14 plus, feeding at thawed edge of lake", Feb 3, Cold Spring Harbor (J. Taylor). Least Bittern: male, Mar 25, Long Beach (R. Johnson)—earliest Regional record, captured in residential area, verified and later released at Jones. Glossy Ibis: arr Mar 23, JBWR (H. Johnson)—earliest Regional record.

Mute Swan: "Dec 12, pair and three young left lake at Cold Spring Harbor due to freeze-up; Feb 5, all returned; Mar 6, only adult pair present; Mar 17, first sign of nest-building; Mar 27, one egg in nest." (J. Taylor)—earliest egg date for Region. Blue Goose: Jan 16, Setauket (M. Hemmerick). European Widgeon: Dec 22, Southaven (GR). Wood Duck: three, Dec 26, (CSCC). TUFTED DUCK: the drake present on the Hudson R near the George Washington bridge for the past three winters reappeared sometime in Dec and remained at least to Feb (dates not available—it was recorded on the Manhattan CC on Dec 22). Harlequin Duck: only up to six reported during winter at Jones Inlet; two, Dec 21, Fire Island (CaCC); Feb 21, Shinnecock Inlet (GR).

Migrant waterfowl maxima at Cold Spring Harbor (J. Taylor)—Black Duck 784, Mar 9; Canvasback 179, Mar 9; Greater Scaup 1500, Mar 11.

HAWKS—OWLS: Turkey Vulture: adult, Dec 29—Feb 19, Montauk (H. Kemp, GR, *et al*)—extremely rare winterer. Goshawk: a wintering individual at the Southside Sportsman's Club, Oakdale was last seen Mar 24 (R. Budliger). Red-tailed Hawk: max 17, Dec 29, (NNCC). [Broad-winged Hawk: "a small, short-tailed immature buteo" was seen at Montauk on Jan 18 (M. Hemmerick, B. Frech)—a well-written description sent to the editors tends to eliminate the possibility of it having been an imm Red-shouldered. It is hoped that a full description of this and other records will be published in a future issue.] Bald Eagle: five reports—imm, Dec 21—Mar, Heckscher State Pk (mob); imm, Dec 21, flying over ocean off Fire Island Inlet (RR); imm, Dec 21, JBWR (*fide* H. Johnson); Dec 26, (CSCC); imm, Dec 28, Gardiner's Island (mob). Pigeon Hawk: two, possibly three wintered in the Jones—Oak Beach area (CW, R. Cohen, *et al*); Dec 21, Bayard Cutting Arboretum (T. Lauro)—netted and banded; Dec 22, Breezy Pt. (J. Yrizarry); two, Dec 26, (CSCC). Common Gallinule: an individual wintered at Sage Pond, Lawrence (TD, *et al*)—color-photographed.

Semipalmated Plover: Dec 21, Shinnecock Inlet (GR)—rarely to late Dec. Common Snipe: max 38, Dec 26, (CSCC)—easily this Region's highest winter count; 13, Dec 29, (NNCC). Willet: Dec 5, JBWR (BC, S. Melum); Dec 21, Shinnecock Inlet (GR)—latest Regional records. Knot: two, Dec 21, Shinnecock Inlet (GR); flock of up to eight wintered at Jones Inlet at least to Mar 10 (W. Friton, *et al*)—excellent color slides submitted to the editors leave no doubt as to identification. Red Phalarope: flock of six swimming birds, Dec 21, 2–3 miles off Captree (RR)—('full winter plumage, two-tone bills', second winter record for Region.

LESSER BLACK-BACKED GULL: adult, Feb 16, Fire Island Inlet (K. Malone). Black-legged Kittiwake: max 46, Dec 21, off Fire Island (RR). **SABINE'S GULL:** adult in winter plumage, Dec 21, several miles off Captree (RR)—". . . flew past at a moderate distance while boat was anchored . . . trace of hood, bill dark, tip not seen. Tail distinctively forked, noticeably more so than notch in kittiwake tail . . . distinct wing pattern carefully observed." An amazing record from an experienced birder; a recent study indicated this species' normal winter range as off southwest Africa (see *Bird-Banding*, 39 (4): 322, 1968).

Razorbill: three, Jan 11, Montauk (RP). **COMMON MURRE:** a lightly oiled bird was found sitting on the beach at Fire Island on Jan 24 (J. Aho R. Budliger). Thick-billed Murre: three, Dec 21, off Fire Island (RR). **BLACK GUILLEMOT:** Jan 11, Montauk (RP)—"winter-plumaged, just beyond surf near point." Saw-whet Owl: 16 were found dead during Oct-Mar at Jones Beach (CW)—"all but four car kills."

GOATSUCKERS—STARLING: Red-bellied Woodpecker: Dec 21, Cunningham Pk (P. Baruch); three, Dec 29, (NNCC); Jan 1-19, Sea Cliff (D. Quortop). Eastern Phoebe: three winter reports—Dec 21, Alley Pond Pk (A. Bell, R. Cioffi, J. Doran); Jan 19, Mill Neck (A. Bell); Feb 15, Amityville (T. Lauro). **BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE:** Feb 2, Manursing Pt, Westchester Co (J. S. Moyle, R. Engler, *et al*)—not known if an escape, said to have been present at local feeder for over two months. **VARIED THRUSH:** male, Jan 5-Mar 2, Southaven (D. Puleston, GR,LW, *et al*)—banded and photographed by LW on Jan 10. Hermit Thrush: very rare this winter—one visiting a Roslyn Estates feeder from Feb 9 to period's end was heard singing in late Mar (A. Baker). Cedar Waxwing: 44, Dec 21, flying over ocean off Fire Island (RR).

VIREOS—WARBLERS: White-eyed Vireo: Mar 29, High Rock Pk, Staten Island (N. Wagerick); Mar 31, Mill Neck (L. Shore, W. Baumann, J. Doran)—both over two weeks earlier than previous early date; well reported, yellow "spectacles", white iris noted for both sightings. Northern Waterthrush: Dec 26, Mastic (W. Nichols, D. Weld, M. and J. Osmund, *fide* GR)—second winter occurrence for the Region, seen at close range as it worked along the edge of a frozen pond.

BLACKBIRDS—SPARROWS: Red-winged Blackbirds: arr Mar 4, Hartsdale, Westchester Co (R. Engler). Baltimore Oriole: five reports—female, Dec 18 through period, Deer Pk (Mrs. E. File *et al*)—color-photographed, "began eating sunflower seeds on Feb 11"! male, Dec 26-31, Deer Pk (Mrs. E. File)—color-photographed; Jan 20-31, Glen Cove (F. McDonough, C. White); female, Feb 10, Great Neck (K. Steir); female, Feb 2, Deer Pk (Mrs. E. File)—color-photographed. **BOAT-TAILED GRACKLE:** the male present at several Far Rockaway feeders the past two years departed at the "end of Oct" and arrived back this year Mar 15 (Mrs. R. Berman, Mrs. J. Sorman, *et al*).

Blue Grosbeak: 2nd year male, Mar 25-Apr 11, Westhampton Beach (B. Federico, C. Coll, L. Warfield, *fide* LW)—earliest Regional record by nearly a month. Dickcissel: two, Dec 21, Fire Island (CaCC). Evening Grosbeak: 85, Dec 26, (CSCC); 70, Dec 29, (NNCC); 51, Dec 21, (CaCC); 35, Dec 28, (MkCC). Pine Grosbeak: flock of up to 24, Dec 28-Mar 17, Montauk (mob); two, Dec 22, Greenwood Cemetery (M. Cashman); Dec 29, (NNCC); Jan 18, Irvington Reservoir, Westchester Co (R. Engler). Common Redpoll: max counts—30, Jan 8, Port Washington (B. Forguer); 30-40, Feb 8, Orient Pt. (mob); 30, Feb 19, Montauk (BC, AD). Pine Siskin: max 146, Dec 29, (MkCC). Red Crossbill: 23, Dec 13, Mill Neck (J. Doran); four, Dec 21, (CaCC); max 41, Dec 29, (MkCC). White-winged Crossbill: only report Mar 3-29, Sea Cliff (B. Spencer, E. Bartlett, A. Bell, R. Cioffi)—at feeder. Ipswich Sparrow: an individual frequented a backyard feeder in Freeport during Feb and Mar (CW)—far from its normal habitat, "it was more successful at fighting off the House Sparrows than either Savannah or Song Sparrows." Vesper Sparrow: max 26, Jan 15, Filasky's Farm, Old Brookville (BC). Tree Sparrow: max

775, Dec 26, (CSCC). Chipping Sparrow: Jan 13, Mattituck (AD); Feb 22–Mar 30, Bayard Cutting Arboretum (T. Lauro, D. Ford)—banded and retrapped at feeder. White-crowned Sparrow: imm, Mar 30–Apr 7, Speonk (LW)—an early migrant or an overlooked winterer.

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BOOK REVIEW

RURAL HOURS. Susan Fennimore Cooper, with introduction by David Jones. 1968. Syracuse University Press. xxxvii + 337 pp. \$6.95.

The first edition of this collection of day-to-day notes on nature in the Cooperstown area of New York State, presented in journal form, was published in 1850. In 1887 Houghton, Mifflin published a "new and revised edition" of which this is a reprint.

Susan Cooper was apparently a keen observer interested in all aspects of nature. Most of the entries are concerned with weather, birds, trees, flowers and general landscape. However, she also included enough comment on the people to give a good picture of life in the Cooperstown area at that time, and of the effect of human activities on the landscape.

The many entries about birds seem to present a fairly complete picture of the bird life of Cooperstown, with notes on time of arrival, abundance and habits. One entry especially interested me (March 27, page 25):

"A flock of rusty blackbird about the village. . . . All kinds of blackbirds are rare here; they are said to have been very numerous indeed at the settlement of the country, but have very much diminished in numbers of late years. And yet, they are still very common in some of the older parts of the country. . . . The red-wing black-bird we have never seen in this county; it may possibly be found here, but certainly is not as common as elsewhere. Nor is the cow-bunting often seen with us."

She was a conservationist long before that word was in use. On pages 141–155 there is a long discussion of the forest around Cooperstown. Present-day bulldozer operators seem to be direct heirs to the habits she decried:

"The first colonists looked upon a tree as an enemy, and to judge by the appearances . . . something of the same spirit prevails among their descendents at the present hour. . . . Mature trees, young saplings, and last year's seedlings, are all destroyed at one blow by the axe or by fire. . . . One would think that by this time, when the forest has fallen in all the valleys—with the hills becoming more bare every day . . . some forethought and care in this respect would be natural in people laying claim to common sense. . . . Thinning woods and not blasting them . . . preserving the wood on the hill-tops and rough hill-sides; encouraging a coppice on this or that knoll; permitting bushes and young trees to grow at will along the brooks and watercourses . . . how desirable would be the result."

References to information from other sources I found much less interesting than her own observations. Occasionally she lapses into long-winded digressions on her "pet peeves"—such as the use of scientific names for common names of some flowers and choice of place names in the United States. Once in a while the 1850 viewpoint is over-sentimental for these days.

The book afforded me pleasant browsing, picturing the small town of the mid-1850's as I read, and comparing her comments on the landscape with what might be written today. Capriciousness of upstate New York weather seems not to have changed a bit.

DWM